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EDITORIAL

All Power to the Imagination!

Caminante, no hay camino.
Se hace camino al andar.

These lines by the great Spanish poet Antonio Machado might roughly be Englished as: *Traveller, there is no road. The road is made by walking.* A supporter of the Republican cause, Machado would walk with the defeated into exile in France at the end of the Spanish Civil War, and die there close to the border in the winter of 1939. On a scrap of paper in the pocket of his overcoat was a line of verse new-turned.

Machado's words always summon for me the teacher starting out with the new class. For all the lesson-planning and preparation, the work scheme with its intricate resources, for all the maps and forethought, *the road is made by walking.*

The celebrated land artist Richard Long makes works by walking in a landscape. He finds his materials to hand: stones, pine needles, snow, the ground itself which he will tread. He makes use of words too: lists of observations; lines of description. His forms are geometric and simple. Long has walked on every continent making his mark in straight lines and circles, spirals and crosses. He photographs what he has made as a record, often the only record. Long says each work encompasses its surroundings from earth to sky.

In the summer of 2017 Richard Long made six works in the grounds of Houghton Hall in Norfolk, erstwhile country retreat of Robert Walpole. An educational programme centred on this exhibition attracted a thousand young people from schools across the county to take part in workshops led by writers and artists, and to explore Long's artworks independently. As the evaluator for this programme, I saw for myself and heard from others how powerfully it engaged and how productively it was exploited. Teachers told me how their pupils showed new sides of themselves in encountering Long's work, and how, enabled by workshop leaders, they immersed themselves in creative activities and found vivid ways to articulate complex responses.

The influence of the encounter with Long's art continued back at school. Young people remembered it as enriching. Teachers intensified and extended it through discussion, creation and performance. Primary pupils re-wrote the

Houghton Hall brochure to give visitors information about what to expect from the sculptures. They painted, made sculptures, scripted and performed plays whose props and costumes they designed, and wrote poetry which they valued enough to give to people at home. Secondary school students explored images they'd sketched or photographed at Houghton, and ideas they'd incubated there, to make new coursework for their art exams. One student told me about the layered work in front of her, a multi-media palimpsest of photos, logos, floor-plans, drawings and words. Richard Long had left his mark on the landscape, she said, so she was recording how she had left her mark on her school.

Long's works at Houghton Hall are made from local carrstone and flint, from slate and pigment. Encountering these materials arranged (or in the case of the pigment, simply poured) provoked students to think further about what might constitute 'art', and to change their minds. 'I didn't think geometric shapes worked with nature,' one told me. 'I have seen that they do.' Another said that seeing Long's 'abstract art has given me more ideas about how I can use abstraction in my own work'. Several were struck by Long's openness to happenstance and his willingness to let chance play a part in what he makes, and had begun to explore how they too could incorporate these elements in their artworks.

There is much more to tell about the power of the Houghton Hall exhibition to engage and educate young people, and about the appetite of practitioners for programmes of this kind. They see their value: how they prompt, license and nourish new ways to think and make. A child declared: 'I felt artistic at Houghton Hall and was drawing from my heart.' A teenager wrote that 'opening your mind to new media helps with achieving a wider variety of pieces'. Another told me: 'I thought about the place more.' A teacher showed me photos of a widening spiral path deliberately made by a group of young people walking in the dew on a morning field after their visit to Houghton. *Se hace camino al andar.*

But the curriculum-space given over to the arts, whether drama, music, dance or 'art' however defined, declines even as policy-makers continue to scant what the arts make possible in and for the young. Nansi Ellis's fleet-footed account of the state of formal teaching about the arts in schools today notes that *almost half of all pupils take no arts subjects* at GCSE level. Jonathan Savage's article lays bare the slow dilution, through out-sourcing, of provision in schools for music education. Such exiling of artistic activity, the prolonged failure to value creative performance by ensuring it has proper curricular time and space, prevents teachers from seeing their students more fully, which is to say more truly. An approach to curriculum which overlooks the indispensability of art, of human play at its most serious, sophisticated and exalted, denies to young people perhaps the most necessary educational terrain. For in that terrain, free to express what matters to them, young people prepare themselves to be able to consider what matters to all of us. They meet the challenges posed by the grammar of artistic form, and weigh up the worth of their own response. They

apprehend the tradition in which their artwork would take its place. They make their own meanings.

Such meaning-making is the life-blood both of education understood as the process of living rather than as preparation for future living, and of an approach to formal schooling which recognises that the education of the intellect is founded on the free play of imagination.

Such an approach was powerfully argued by Michael Armstrong in his Brian Simon Memorial Lecture of 2012 (Armstrong, 2013). In that lecture, Michael noted Brian Simon's respect for the poet Coleridge's understanding of education best conceived. He quotes an essay by Simon from 1985:

> 'Can we derive from Coleridge', Brian asks, 'a convincing rationale for educational procedures which reject the "mechanical" and focus on the development of the inner powers of the child? Does Coleridge provide a justification for the concept of the appropriation of knowledge rather than its assimilation?' 'The conclusion must be positive', he answers. 'It is in this area that the humanist educator of our times must seek his or her rationale.' (Simon, 1985, p. 148; cited in Armstrong, 2013, p. 27)

In his sketch of a vision for primary education freed from current constraints and re-dedicated, in Coleridgean and Simonian fashion, to the growth of the individual child, John Coe suggests that 'learning will be fostered as much in the outside environment as within the school building'. Let us hope.

A glimpse of what is possible even as the goad of England's high-stakes testing and examination system continues to be kicked against is provided by a set of articles written by practitioners at Stanley Park High School, whose headteacher, David Taylor, also contributed to the previous number of *FORUM*. Mike Davies, who wrote in that number about the continuing quest for a comprehensive curriculum, introduces these texts. He shows how the Excellent Futures Curriculum developed at Stanley Park offers a framework for establishing *a thriving learning culture* and creative approaches to pedagogy. A mainstay is the production of work for exhibition, work assessed by its audiences: 'parents, other students, community members or professionals from the outside world', as Katie Alden puts it in her detailed account. Stanley Park's commitment to collaborative approaches to teaching and learning, and to creativity as the high road to skill (in Michael Armstrong's phrase), is evident in the articles by Jacquie Thomas and Susan Noble. Alison Bailey and David Taylor, in their article, consider how Stanley Park strives to become truly inclusive.

Richard Zaiser, who has taught modern foreign languages across Europe, favours using literature in his classroom because to do so sparks powerful personal responses and generates creative work, thereby enhancing learning. He also sees this approach as vital for the teacher's sense of purposefulness. As he writes, to use 'literature in the classroom both to offer individual development

and to foster communicative skills will help me see my work as a meaningful contribution to my pupils' formative years'.

The sheaf of articles directly engaging with the arts, and so with the mobilisation of the imagination in the cause of education, is tied up by Colin Richards. A former School Inspector (HMI), Colin imagines himself into the situation of a headteacher before and after an Ofsted inspection. He hopes Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's current chief inspector, might walk a mile, or a day, in the shoes of such a headteacher, and so be educated.

Richard Long has said that the scope and range of his work extends 'as far as the eye can see'. Yet to look far into a landscape is to look far back into it also. Any landscape is historical, and so inescapably politically charged. In the early eighteenth century, when Robert Walpole extended his family's domain at Houghton, inhabitants were required to quit what was left of a local medieval village so that those buildings might be levelled in order to 'improve' the view from the Hall. New Houghton was built to the south: two parallel rows of identical estate cottages. What those already empowered imagine can alter our shared material reality. For the powerless, imagination may furnish merely an escape route from the brute political truth of the day, and as such risks being condemned as a diversion from urgent political tasks.

Several articles in this number may help ward off that danger. Pat Ainley and Martin Allen recall what Marx understood capitalism to impose necessarily on society: development of the general intellect. They present an account of the Labour Party's social democratic origins and mission, exposing the vacillation within the party around questions of workers' control and the need for a thoroughgoing socialist programme. A break from what they term 'Labour's traditional ... pedagogic project' is vital to open the road for a new line of march. Ainley and Allen touch on Labour's 'National Education Service'; this will be the focus for the next issue of *FORUM*.

John Quicke looks at the intensifying crisis in teacher recruitment and retention, and in particular at the role played by excessive teacher workload. Department for Education (DfE) figures show that Initial Teacher Education courses continue to recruit significantly below target, while vacancies in schools are up and school rolls rise. Quicke scrutinises the government's response. He argues that a restoration of trust between government and teachers is long overdue, and can come about only through more democratic forms of accountability.

Disenchantment among teachers, disaffection among students and the need for renewed democracy underpin Fiona Carnie's call for the re-building of our education system from the ground up. This means creating a new participatory framework by listening to teachers, parents and students, and by re-inventing the concept of the Community School.

The concluding part of the interview conducted by Jane Martin and Melissa Benn with Clyde Chitty opens this issue of *FORUM*. Clyde explores his career in the secondary classroom and in academia, comments on principal figures and pivotal moments, and reflects on *the whole landscape of education* he

has traversed. The article concludes with an index of all Clyde's writings for *FORUM*. Howard Stevenson's riposte to Susanne Wiborg's account of the NUT at two moments in its history will appear next time.

In the spring of 50 years ago, when Clyde Chitty found himself teaching in a Bromley comprehensive, on the cobbled streets of Paris new visions of the social order were being proclaimed, to be taken up widely and with lightning speed. The militancy of youth allied itself with the strength of organised labour, and a whole society stood on the brink of revolutionary change. The cry arose: *L'imagination au pouvoir!*

Let it sound again. There is no road save the road we make by walking, and to make it must we not first imagine?

Patrick Yarker

References

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Jane McGregor

Jane McGregor, who has sadly died, was a long-standing member of *FORUM*'s editorial board. We reprint two tributes, from Pat Thomson and from Michael Fielding, *FORUM*'s chairperson. Their words for Jane were originally published in the journal *Connect*, and we are grateful for permission to reproduce them here.

Pat Thomson writes:

I first met Jane McGregor as her external PhD examiner. Her thesis was both thorough and creative, taking an innovative view of the ways in which teachers in one school occupied various space, social, professional and temporal. This research subsequently appeared in refereed journal articles and is cited as seminal work in the field of spatialities in education.

Jane, together with Michael Fielding, Bridget Somekh and myself, successfully applied for an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) seminar series that critically interrogated pupil voice. Jane represented the National College for School Leadership in the bid, and took an active part not only in organising one of the four seminars, but also in ensuring that we

university-based partners always involved teachers and students. Jane was enthusiastic about and supportive of the publications that resulted from the series, ensuring that teachers and schools knew about them and that the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCSL) took account of our discussions.

I subsequently worked with Jane on the Creative School Change project, funded by Creative Partnerships. Jane was one of four researchers whose job was to conduct initial case-study visits to forty schools, followed by more intensive work in twelve of them. Jane was responsible for the primary data collection over three years in four of these twelve schools. I remember visiting a school on the south coast with her in the second year of the project. With characteristic generosity, Jane invited me to stay with her overnight and then drive to the school the next day. We had some fun working out how to get the GPS working, with both of us seemingly incapable of getting the rather grating guidance to stop, even when we arrived in the school yard.

This particular school had done some exciting pupil-voice work in the first year and Jane was very keen to see how it had progressed, but conversations with the lead teacher had already suggested that the work had stalled. Our first day saw us both spending time shadowing two separate groups of students around the school. This proved to be an important, but disappointing, experience and we spend a great deal of time that night pacing the pier, trying to make sense of what had happened in and to the school. Disappointingly but not surprisingly, the school changed course the next year, giving up pupil voice and creativity in favour of more conventional quick-fix methods to improve its exam results, something Jane and I often discussed. This was an important reminder of the ways in which pupil-voice initiatives can be marginalised by policy pressures that are conservatively interpreted.

I know that I speak for other members of our project team – Chris Hall, Ken Jones, Lisa Russell, Ethel Sanders and Nick Owen – when I say that our research project benefited hugely from Jane's insights and grounded perspectives, her quick wit and open, collaborative spirit.

I saw Jane on and off over the ensuing years and was saddened by her failing health. I enjoyed seeing her Facebook posts about her travels, and the occasional exchange about exotic locations or the sad state of British politics. Many will be shocked to hear of Jane's passing, and so very sad to know we will not see her again. We will always remember her contributions to our lives and work. Pupil voice has lost a passionate advocate, an insightful commentator and a knowledgeable friend.

Michael Fielding writes:

After a highly successful career as a secondary school humanities teacher and Head of Department, Jane became an equally successful teacher/researcher working in a range of professional and academic institutions, including the National College for School Leadership, the University of Cambridge, London

University Institute of Education, the Open University and a number of local education authorities in England.

Stretching well over a decade, her contribution to the field of student voice has been energising and distinctive. Particularly important has been the work on spatiality that drew on her PhD supervised by Doreen Massey at the Open University. Both Jane and Doreen contributed to the Spring 2004 Special Issue of *FORUM*, 46(1), on 'Space in Schools', which Jane guest-edited. In the next decade Jane went on to apply some of those radical insights to the burgeoning field of student voice. Indeed, the need to understand the variety and significance of different kinds of space in which young people and adults can learn with and from each other remains a central strand of innovative work in the field.

Ten years later in the same journal, reflecting on international progress in student voice, Jane fittingly honours and celebrates Roger Holdsworth's pre-eminent contribution through his remarkable journal *Connect*, and in her introductory remarks on Roger's article – 'Spaces for Partnership. Teach the Teacher: student-led professional development for teachers' (*FORUM*, 56(1), pp 67-78) – applauds the way he 'explores the structural conditions necessary for authentic discussion and reflects on the spaces that need to be created and nurtured for genuine and productive dialogue between teachers and students'.

An enthusiastic supporter of the Learning Without Limits approach (https://learningwithoutlimits.educ.cam.ac.uk) dedicated to developing approaches to teaching and learning that do not rely on determinist beliefs about ability, Jane's guiding values as a teacher and as a researcher were always inclusive and emancipatory and led her in recent years to exciting, innovative approaches in mental health services focusing in particular on the development of Recovery Colleges. Very much in line with her work on student voice, Recovery Colleges develop co-produced and co-facilitated courses, peer support and the development of social networks.

Her passing is a great loss. I shall miss her friendship and intellectual companionship. Generously and genuinely interested in her colleagues' work, she approached challenges with enthusiasm and determination and brought with her a contagious sense of excitement and sparkle, due in no small part to a deeply creative irreverence. A champion of student voice and its international development, her contribution was distinctive, progressive and life-enhancing. Quietly but crucially involved with the recent annual series of Cambridge University international conferences, her warmth, compassion, openness and sense of fun will be fondly remembered and sorely missed.